

Grapevine Airwaves / Friday

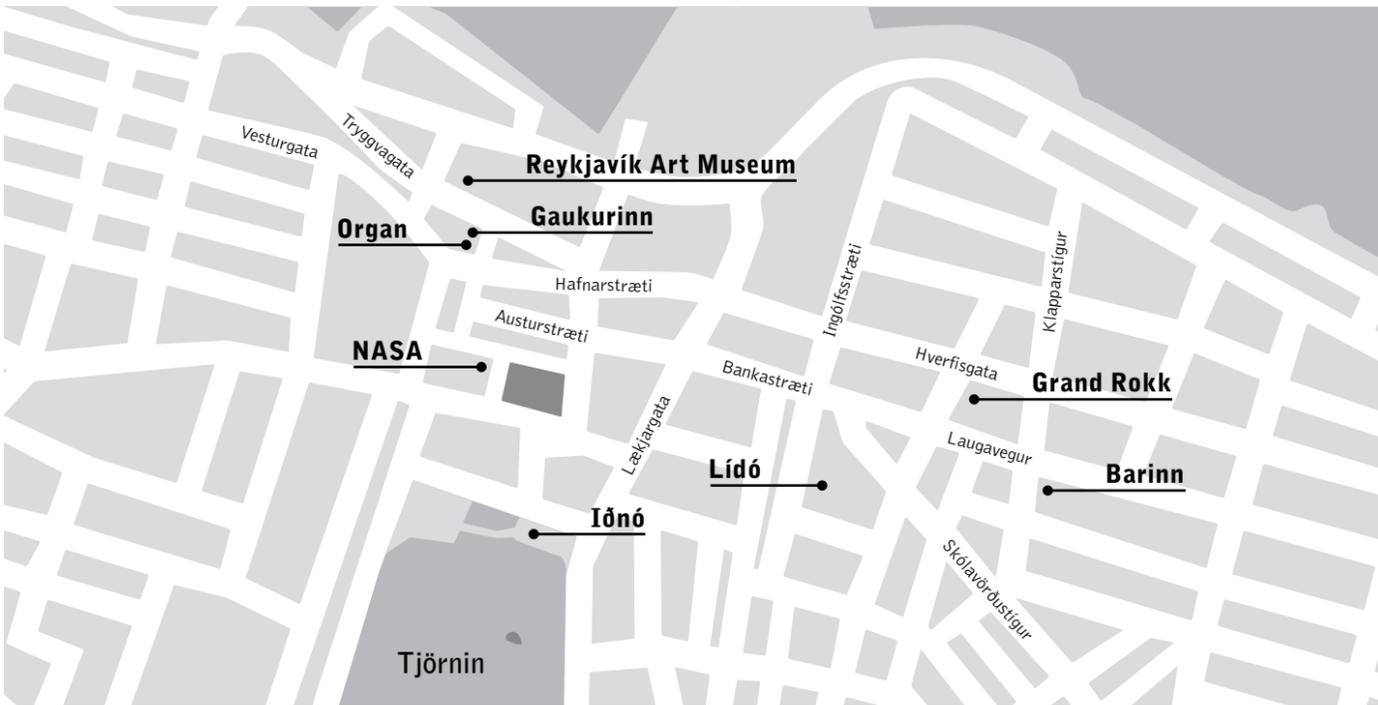
Featured inside:

Buck 65
Skakkamange
of Montreal
Jan Mayen
and many more



Benny Crespo's Gang by Jói Kjartans





Andri / Radio DJ, Reykjavík FM
I'll start with Weapons at Gaukurinn, then move on to Benny Crespo's Gang at Lidó, then go back to Gaukurinn for Reykjavík! and I Adapt, then I will end the night by seeing Hairdoctor at NASA.



Arnar Eggert / Music Journalist
The Ghost, an electro indie band from the Faero Islands is something that I MUST check out. Then join me, please, for Deerhoof in Gaukurinn. Brilliant band. ET Tumason, a modern blues legend in the making, will then without a doubt rock the house at Organ.



Biggi / Editor, Monitor music magazine
Tonight I am mostly going to spend my time checking out Icelandic bands that I've not seen before, or not seen for a long time. I'll try to see Esja, Jezebel, Mr. Silla & Mongoose, The Viking Giant Show, and Trentemöller.

Friday Schedule

Reykjavík Art Museum

- 00:00 of Montreal (US)
- 23:00 múm
- 21:30 Trentemöller (DK)
- 20:45 Loney, Dear (SE)
- 20:00 Kalli

Iðnó

- 01:00 Jagúar
- 00:00 Buck 65 (CA)
- 23:15 Forgotten Lores
- 22:15 Plants & Animals (CA)
- 21:30 Esja
- 20:45 Samúel J. Samúelsson Big Band
- 20:00 Rökkurró

Grand Rokk

- 02:00 Cliff Clavin
- 01:15 Dark Harvest
- 00:30 Envy of Nona
- 23:45 Severed Crotch
- 23:00 Bootlegs
- 22:15 Shogun
- 21:30 Hoffman
- 20:45 Gordon Riots
- 20:00 Trassar

Gaukurinn

- 01:45 Æla
- 01:00 I Adapt
- 00:00 Jakobínarína
- 23:00 Deerhoof (US)
- 22:15 Reykjavík!
- 21:30 Jan Mayen
- 20:45 Sudden Weather Change
- 20:00 Weapons

NASA

- 02:00 Hairdoctor
- 01:15 Ghostigital
- 00:00 GusGus
- 23:00 Motion Boys
- 22:15 Prinzhorn Dance School (UK)
- 21:30 Skakkamanage
- 20:45 Bloodgroup
- 20:00 Mr. Silla & Mongoose

Organ

- 02:00 NilFisk
- 01:15 Sometime
- 00:30 Thundercats
- 23:30 Singapore Sling
- 22:45 ET Tumason
- 22:00 Retron
- 21:15 Theatre Fall (SCO)
- 20:30 Miri
- 19:45 Búdrýgindi

Lidó

- 02:00 The Viking Giant Show
- 01:15 Computerclub (UK)
- 00:15 Heavy Trash (US/DK)
- 23:30 The Tremolo Beer Gut (DK/SE)
- 22:45 Pétur Ben
- 22:00 Benny Crespo's Gang
- 21:15 Fabúla
- 20:30 Sverrir Bergmann

Barinn / Airwaves Bar

- 04:00 Brunahein & Ghozt
- 01:00 DJ Baldur aka Djezus
- 23:00 Thor
- 20:00 Leópold

Barinn / Airwaves Club

- 03:00 Kasper Björke (DK)
- 02:15 Mental Overdrive (NO)
- 01:30 Frost (NO)
- 00:45 Plúseinn
- 00:00 Jezebel
- 23:15 The Ghost (FO)
- 22:30 Receptors (US)
- 21:50 Van of Two
- 21:10 Enkidu
- 20:30 Vöi

Do not miss...

Loney, Dear (SE)
Reykjavík Art Museum – 20:45

Emil Svanängen of Jönköping is another one of those almost insufferably sweet Swedish pop musicians that seem to have conspired to take over the world. This one is signed to Sup Pop and plays alarmingly tender tunes that will fill your heart with joy and sorrow at the same time.

Reykjavík!
Gaukurinn – 22:15

A self-described hedonistic punk band. This Fugazi on drugs-like fivesome, is known to produce more energy on stage than a medium sized hydroelectric power plant. They have toured extensively on the strength of their last album Glacial Landscapes, Religion, Oppression and Alcohol, which topped most Icelandic critics' year-end lists last year.

Motion Boys
NASA – 23:00

The Icelandic dance-pop movement may well have peaked with the Motion Boys' summer release, Hold me Closer and a much anticipated debut album is scheduled for release later this year. This former duo is now a full six-piece band that knows how to push all your dance buttons.

GusGus
NASA – 00:00

Reigning royalty of the Airwaves kingdom. GusGus is known to create a mass hysteria every time they hit the stage. Women faint and grown men cry to their wicked beats. Their latest LP, Forever, issued earlier this year has ensured that GusGus will reign, forever.

I Adapt
Gaukurinn – 01:00

Fresh of a US tour, Icelandic hardcore kings I Adapt is a band that leaves their heart on the floor every time they play. Their latest album, Chainlike Burden, has already been short listed as one of the top releases of 2007 by Icelandic rock critics. Miss this show and your rock points will suffer.

Computerclub (UK)
Lidó – 01:15

From the beaches of Birmingham (wait, there is a beach in Birmingham, right?) comes Computerclub, an indie pop quartet with an affinity for the post-punk wave. Their music has been described as a throw-back to the eighties with a modern twist, but a more accurate descriptive phrase would be 'awesome'.

Masthead

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Buck 65

Some quick facts about Buck 65: His real name is Richard Terfry, and he began rapping during the early Nineties in his native Nova Scotia; he speaks French and lived in Paris for several years; he won a Juno award, the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy; Radiohead are big fans of his; he owns around 40,000 records; and he's probably the only rapper in the world who has been influenced by the hip-hop group Treacherous Three, the writer Anton Chekov and the Belgian singer Jacques Brel.

Suffice it to say that Terfry isn't your average rapper, and he certainly doesn't make conventional rap records. Buck 65 albums are addictive things that sometimes sound like straight-ahead hip-hop but often include eerie, atmospheric beats and snatches of blues, country and folk. His lyrics are smart but very off-kilter, running from blistering rhymes about his rural roots to spoken-word narratives about backwoods oddballs and other strange characters. There's a little Beck in Terfry's genre-crossing music, and a little Tom Waits in Terfry's gruff voice, but he doesn't really sound like anyone else. "I think there's room for sophistication in the art form [of hip-hop]," says Terfry, who's thirty-five. "I want there to be hip-hop records that I can still get into when I'm sixty."

Terfry's great new album, Situation, is partly a concept record about the year 1957, complete with references to the Cold War, Marilyn Monroe, and Elvis. "It was a very significant year," Terfry says. "When Elvis first showed up and got everyone talking, that was utterly earth-shattering. Events like that have almost conditioned the way we think. They've defined what a cultural hero is." Terfry was backed on Situation by Nova Scotian musicians he's worked and toured with in the past, and the music runs from dark soundscapes to hot, hook-y beats. Meanwhile, Terfry delivers stronger rhymes than he ever has, playing a sharp cultural observer on "1957" and turning out great character sketches like "Shutter Bugging," a dark banger about a porn photographer. "I rapped my ass off on this record," he says.

Terfry wrote and recorded Situation amid some strange, tumultuous events. After releasing a compilation of early material, This Right Here is Buck 65, Terfry's American label, V2, went out of business. (Situation will be released in North America on Strange Famous Records, owned by Sage Francis.) Over the past few years, Terfry also got engaged, then broke up with, a French woman and moved between Paris, New York and Toronto. Even stranger, he co-hosted the Juno awards with fellow Canadian Pamela Anderson. "I had my pre-conceived notions about her, but they were all completely shattered," Terfry says of Anderson. "I can tell you that her Canadian nature came shining through. She's a very intelligent, sweet person, and she's nobody's fool."

Terfry has come a long way. Growing up in Mt. Uniacke, a depressed area near Halifax, Nova Scotia, he experienced both a rural lifestyle and observed some odd, shadowy figures – the kind of people he often writes about in his

songs. "I remember the smell of pine trees, and that weird feeling of suction when you're wearing rubber boots and you step in mud," Terfry says. "I was always aware that there was a real dark side to this community. There was a guy who was a child molester, and everybody knew it but nobody ever said anything about it. There you are at the Huckabuck game and a child molester's standing beside you, all sweaty with a smirk on his face."

Terfry fell in love with early hip-hop and began recording on a department store DJ setup, but he was also a great baseball player, and he saw the sport as his ticket out of Nova Scotia. "I went to this baseball school in nowhere, Nova Scotia," he says. "Their big selling point was this guy Stan Sanders, who scouted Mike Schmidt. When I was sixteen I just lit the whole place on fire. He was connected to the Yankees system and I was his project. Then I injured my knee and that was that."

Terfry ended up getting a biology degree from a college in Nova Scotia. He also began writing and performing his own material as Buck 65. Depending on which story you believe, Terfry took the name from his weight of 165 pounds or from a square-dance caller whose prized possession was a '65 Buick. Early reactions to Terfry's material were mixed. "Indie rock was running the show in Nova Scotia at that point, and I was running on some sort of misinterpretation of [hip-hop]," he says. "I was making these dadaist hip-hop records. Looking back, I can hardly blame anyone for looking at me as a curiosity." Before his career took off, Terfry was homeless and slept in cars for a while.

Since those early days, he's released a series of excellent albums that earned him a load of new fans across North America and Europe – including Radiohead, who befriended Terfry and frequently mentioned him in interviews. Lately, Terfry has been ridiculously prolific: Situation was recorded during a period of intense creativity that also resulted in a soundtrack to a trucking movie, an acoustic project, an all-electronic album Terfry hopes to release in the spring, and a bunch of strange covers – "everything from Klaus Nomi things to classic hip-hop songs." "I've just become more confident and assured in what I've been doing," Terfry says. "I feel like I'm beginning to stake out my own turf."

Words by Christian Hoard

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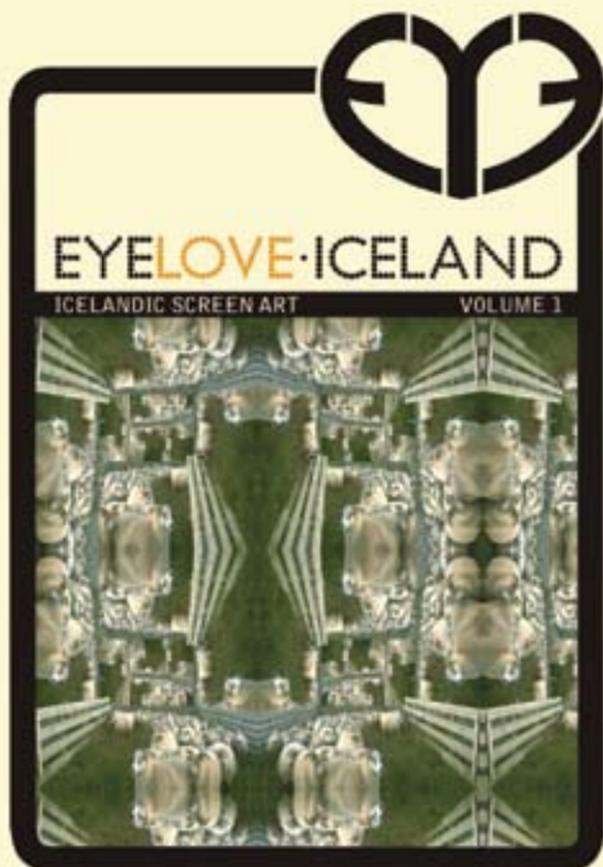
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Interview



Photo by GAS

Skakkamanage

To celebrate the release of their debut album 'Lab of Love' in Japan, lo-fi indie-pop group Skakkamanage threw a peaceful concert at bar Organ last weekend, where they spread love and joy to their much appreciative fans.

The atmosphere was electric when they finally unveiled a home-made peace tower of their own in front of a large crowd gathered to witness this memorable moment. After leading the crowd in a "We are the World" sing-along, Skakkamanage finished their set and joined the now extremely cheerful party.

It's not an everyday event that an Icelandic band is added to the list of talents discovered by the Japanese music aficionados, so the band had every right to seriously celebrate. How the release came about was somewhat of a coincidence.

"Örvar [from múm] was in Japan last year and met people from Afterhours, which is a magazine and record label. He gave them our album and they later contacted us and wanted to try a release," explains Svavar, Skakkamanage's lead singer and songwriter. "It's been interesting to communicate with the people in Japan. They somehow have a different take on things. I can't wait to go to Japan and get to know the mentality even better. That's high up on our list, to go to Tokyo and play."

The Skakkamanage adventure began as a one-man bedroom-project in 2003 but soon turned into a cheerful trio of newlyweds Svavar and Berglind and their drummer friend Þorri. Three years later, Smekkleysa released their first LP.

"It all started when I was working on my graduate project from the Icelandic Academy of the Arts. I'd written some songs and recorded them. That fall, I met Berglind, we started playing together, got Þorri to check out our music and he joined in. For a whole winter, it was just the three of us, playing these songs and adding new ones to the mix," Svavar says.

In 2004, they premiered their material for a large group of friends at Klúbburinn, a bar in the Reykjavík suburb Grafarvogur. Since then, they've played every big and tiny venue in Reykjavík, established an ever-growing fan-base, and been praised for their live gigs by concertgoers and music critics alike.

On stage, the trio is usually backed by harmonica-mastermind Örvar and multi-instrumentalist Borko. They've also recruited a new bassist but Svavar says they still define themselves as a trio: "When we are three, we are three and when we are six, we are six. It just depends on the time and day. We haven't really played many gigs since last year so we don't know how this will unfold in the future."

The reason for the lack of concerts is the couple's nine-month relaxation in Barcelona, where they spent the time in between Tapas eating and sangria drinking to write a bunch of new songs. Þorri came to visit, they relaxed some more and continued with the song writing. "It was very cosy. We would just mess around at home, our friends came and hung out, gave us new ideas and pointed out what they liked and disliked. That was helpful and also lots of fun," Svavar says. "Are we moving in a new direction sound-wise? I don't know. Some of the songs are more rock than we've been known for while others are more lo-fi than ever. They're quite diverse," he adds.

They aim at a release next spring and will present some of the new material at NASA tonight. "We will play a good mix. I guess we have to turn up the speed a bit though, considering the line-up. We're next after [energetic electro dance-pop group] Bloodgroup. You just have to count in much faster," Svavar says jokingly to Þorri, who is everything but worried: "We've experimented so much with our songs. When we for example perform for a younger crowd, we play the versions we think they would like the most," says Þorri and continues: "We've played the songs so many times that they've gone in all possible directions. I guess you just always need to be able to play as you go."

Words by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Skakkamanage plays NASA, tonight at 21:30

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Interview



of Montreal

Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer, of Montreal's 2007 release, is not entirely the psychedelic glam rock offering it looks to be. In passing, it might evoke comparisons to David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust and other '70s glam rock concept albums, but in fact, it is an emotional confession of a man who is at the end of his rope.

of Montreal's guitar player Bryan Poole explains: "I would say that there have been other concept albums in the of Montreal catalogue, you know, but this one was a bit more personal, dealing with more adult type of subject matters. Before it was maybe more fantastical, something that was more in the realm of a fictional landscape, whereas this one was more of a weird concept album."

Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer details the personal problems of Kevin Barnes, of Montreal's singer and the band's de facto creative force. In 2006, Barnes battled depression and his marriage had nearly dissolved. The album is highly personal. Poole explains that Barnes's life was pretty much falling apart at that time, and this was his way of dealing with it, and essentially, the album was "something that just came out of what Kevin was experiencing, things that he had no control over, and the only way he could deal with it was to write songs about it. There is a form of therapy in it, you know?"

By all accounts, of Montreal is Kevin Barnes's brainchild. According to Poole, the line between Kevin Barnes and of Montreal has always been blurry. Barnes formed the band, recruited other band members, and writes most of the songs, besides recording and producing the albums. Hissing Fauna is no exception. "The last album was 99.7% Kevin's," says Poole. "A lot of these songs were very personal to him. He went up to his attic studio and wrote songs like The Past is a Grottesque Animal, something that he didn't even mean to be on the record. All of a sudden, these songs started to amass, and it turned into a record." Poole hints that the band's next effort might be more collaborative though.

The last few months have seen of Montreal fans have become actively critical of the band, after one of their songs appeared on a TV commercial for the Outback Steakhouse restaurant chain. "Yeah, that was a learning experience," Poole says. "Kevin didn't read the contract properly, and didn't have a lawyer look at it, so he thought it was one thing, and it turns out he was signing something else," he explains. "Once he realised what it was, maybe an hour later, they wouldn't let him go back."

For Poole, a strict vegetarian, this was a sad dilemma. "It is kind of hard for kids to be upset about this kind of thing, they have never had a child or had to pay bills or do anything, which is basically what it came down to you know. Kevin wrote the song, so it is actually his money, but, it wasn't even that much money, but at the time he had a wife and a kid, and it takes a lot of money to support a family. He kind of felt weirdly pressured I think. So that's how it worked out. But the kids who are upset about it, you know, if I was sixteen, I'd be upset too," Poole says and adds: "But we don't even play that song in America anymore. It is just ruined. We are very sad about it. But the worst thing was that Outback Steakhouse didn't even use the original song. They made their own version of the song, and it ended becoming this kind of mockery of the art that of Montreal created."

Words by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

of Montreal play at Reykjavík Art Museum tonight at 00:00

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FRIDAY 19/10

16:30 XXX Rottweiler (IS)
17:10 Hafdís Huld (IS)
17:50 Computer Club (UK)
18:30 Audio Improvement (IS)
19:10 Mugison (IS)



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Photo by Leó Stefánsson

Jan Mayen

Jan Mayen are an energetic four-piece from Reykjavík who recently released their second LP. They play guitar-driven indie-rock that makes even the grumpiest of people want to party. Their live shows are not to be missed.

With all due respect for the debut, it's clear that a lot more effort was put into recording and producing 'So Much Better Than Your Normal Life'.

Valli: Yeah, we didn't know anything when we released 'Home of the Free Indeed', three years ago. We knew how to play the instruments but nothing else. Now we're just crazy good!

The album title, is this some sort of an ego-flip?

Valli: No, no, we're just quoting one of our lyrics. It's taken from one of the songs on the album, 'We Just Want To Get Everybody High'. The title of that song is a reference to Michael Jackson's film Moonwalker. In that film, Joe Pesci, the bad guy, is out to get all the school-kids addicted to drugs by using tarantulas that could inject heroine and other substances into the kids with their lethal bites. He just wanted to get everybody high.

Ágúst: In the movie, Jackson eventually stops the evil deed.

Sveinn: 'So Much Better Than Your Normal Life' is also a reference to the fact that music is so much better than your normal life.

Valli: Exactly. This title isn't necessarily all about the Joe Pesci's spider-method, but more about that if life seems grey and meaningless, you can always listen to Jan Mayen and enjoy life, at least while the album is playing.

You recently played Reykjavík Nights in London, an Airwaves preview gig, set to promote the festival ...

Valli: ... and vodka, Reyka vodka! The Brits liked our stuff. We got an encore and everything. Reyka vodka seemed to have opened their mind to some more Mayen. It's damn good vodka.

The original plan was to play more than just this one gig, am I right? Are there any plans on touring Britain in the future, maybe all cramped up in a mini-bus, visiting all the small towns in the middle of nowhere?

Ágúst: The plan was to play more gigs but we soon backed out of that idea, due to lack of time and money. But going on tour is of course the ultimate test for any band. If you make it home alive, you can deal with anything thrown your way.

Valli: We've analysed this together. Who will throw the first punch etc. It will definitely be Ágúst and the first punch will most likely be thrown at me.

Ágúst: Yes, definitely. But hey, should we talk about Smekkleysa?

What about Smekkleysa? (Jan Mayen has a three-album record deal with Icelandic record label Smekkleysa.)

Ágúst: Well, we've never gotten any profits from Smekkleysa so we started to wonder if it might be better to have no record deal at all. In the end, it seems as if the expenses are higher than the incomes anyway.

Sveinn: It's more of a rule than an exception.

Ágúst: Bands such as Radiohead are saying 'fuck this shit' and giving their albums free to download instead. It would make lot more sense for a small band like us to do the same and reach out to a bigger audience in the meanwhile. Either way, we are spending loads on the album and never see the benefits. This is just how the industry works and even though Smekkleysa would lose money on this, it wouldn't change a thing for us. But still, at fourteen, I would've never imagined playing concerts in London and being screwed by a record company. I rather imagined that I would be working as a bus-driver or something, but not doing something that's so cool. [They all laugh]

Ágúst: I guess that in the end, for me at least, being screwed over is better than doing nothing.

Words by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Jan Mayen play at Gaukurinn tonight at 21:30

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Múm - Go Go Smear The Poison...
HAFNARHÚSIÐ at 11 PM



Kalli - While The City Sleeps
HAFNARHÚSIÐ at 8 PM



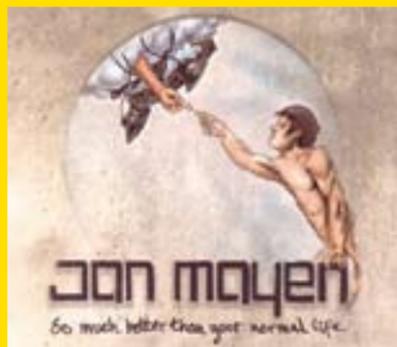
Jagúar - Shake It Good
IÐNÓ at 1 AM



Samúel J. Samúels, Big Band - Fnykur
IÐNÓ at 8:45 PM



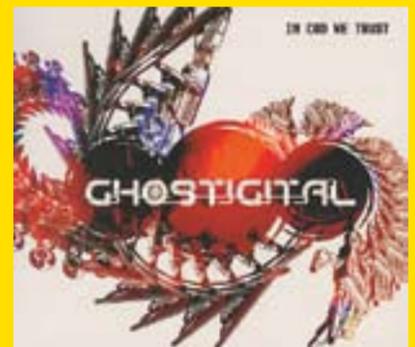
Deerhoof - Friend Opportunity
GAUKURINN at 11 PM



Jan Mayen - So Much Better than...
GAUKURINN at 8:30 PM



Sometime - Supercalifragi...
ORGAN at 1:15 AM



Ghostigital - In Cod We Trust
NASA at 1 AM

Smekkleysa, Rokk og Rósir & Popp
Off venue program
Friday 19/10

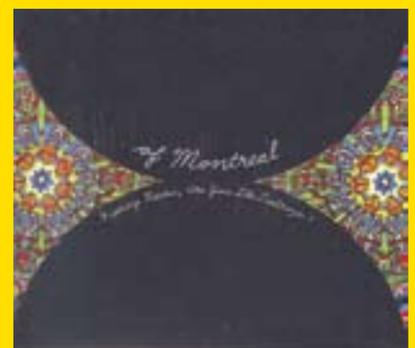
4 PM Best Fwends (US)
4:40 PM Slow Club (UK)
5:20 PM Bob Justman
6 PM Jenny Wilson (SE)



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Gus Gus - Forever
NASA at 12 Midnight



Of Montreal - Hissing Fauna, Are You The ...
HAFNARHÚSIÐ at 12 Midnight



Photo by Jói Kjartans

Benny Crespo's Gang

Three quarters out of Selfoss, three quarters male. Benny Crespo's Gang is one week away from releasing their debut album. Judging from recent live performances, it will be in strong contention for Icelandic album of the year.

The Gang is made up of Bassi (drums), Magnús Óðer (bass, vocals), Helgi Rúnar (guitar, vocals), and Lovísa Sigrúnardóttir (guitar, keyboards, vocals.) They first started to make a name for themselves about three years back for their progressive indie rock sound that alternates heavy guitar riffs, touching air-light melodies and dreamy keyboard effect sounds. After the success of Lovísa's solo album, released last year under her alt-country alter ego Lay Low, the band has taken things slow. This is all about to change.

So, how did this band come together?

Magnús: Well, me and Bassi had been playing in a band together, for about three or four years. There wasn't much going on with that, although we had an album ready, it never came out.

Helgi: It was shit anyway.

Magnús: True. Anyway, we were all living in Selfoss at the time, attending Selfoss high school. We wanted to do something so we hooked up with Helgi, and another guy called Magnús who was with us for a few months before Lovísa joined the band.

OK, so this started as your ordinary high school band?

Lovísa: Just an ordinary garage rock band really.

Bassi: Look, we weren't playing no Green Day songs buddy.

So you all come from Selfoss?

Lovísa: No, I am from Reykjavík.

Helgi: It is just the guys.

Your debut album is coming out, what is it called?

Helgi: It is self-titled.

Magnús: It was supposed to come out before Airwaves, on the 19th, but we just missed it. It will come out the week after Airwaves.

Wasn't there an EP or something out earlier?

Helgi: No, not an EP, but we did do a demo that sort of circled around.

Magnús: It was a live recording of most of the songs that are on this album. But there was never an EP.

No, I am probably referring to that demo. I heard that somewhere. But is this all old material then, or is there something new on there as well?

Lovísa: No, it is all old.

Helgi: It is the history of the band from day one really.

Magnús: The recording process has taken us way too long. It has been at least two years, if not three.

Bassi: We have recorded the drum basis three times.

Lovísa: It has taken a long time.

Helgi: As a result, this is going to be the best sounding album ever released in Iceland.

Magnús: Yeah, but seriously, we just had to put the recording process behind us and get the record out before we could start to write new material. Next time, I think we'll just take four or five weeks and get it done.

Helgi: We also did this mostly ourselves, so there was no one to kick our ass to get going.

Magnús: Yes, we recorded and mixed the album ourselves. Everything except the mastering.

Now, Lovísa has obviously been working on her own stuff as well, and she has gotten pretty far with that (her solo album, Please Don't Hate Me, was awarded Icelandic album of the year 2006.) Does that affect the rest of you at all?

Helgi: It has undoubtedly slowed things down a bit. But I think over all, this has been good for the band.

Magnús: We have been on a hiatus more or less. We just gave her space to promote her album. Now it is time for us to do our thing.

Lovísa: It has been exactly one year since my album came out, it came out the day Airwaves started last year. Unfortunately, we didn't get this one out in time.

Are you in this band for the long run Lovísa?

Lovísa: Yes, totally. This is completely different from what I am doing. Also, I did this first, Lay Low was always a side project, so my loyalty is here. It is very different to write and play songs in a group with others, instead of doing it alone.

Helgi: You had just begun to play guitar when you started playing with Benny's.

Lovísa: Yes, I had only just begun.

Helgi: And you sang horribly.

Lovísa: That I did. I really don't know how to sing.

Magnús: We really had to force her to do it.

So, now you'll be playing and promoting in the near future?

Helgi: Yes, we are going to try to promote this as much as we can here in Iceland, but we would love an opportunity to promote this somewhere else.

Magnús: Now that we have finally released the album, we can also start working on new material. I wasn't ever sure if we would be able to write together anymore after this ordeal.

Bassi: No, we have been stuck with this for so long.

Helgi: The last new song we wrote for the album is two years old.

Magnús: Yes, it was so liberating to finally get this out. Now we have started to work on new material and it sounds good.

Lovísa: This is the first time for two years that we come to practice to write something. Lately we have only practiced before shows.

Words by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

Live Reviews / Wed-Thur

Grizzly Bear by Árni Torfa





Original Melody by Emma Svensson



Solid Gold by Leó Stefánsson



<3 Svanhvít! by Skari

Gaukurinn

Sideways baseball caps and giant hoodies were in abundance both onstage and off during this five-hour gig, which featured seven home-grown hip-hop acts. By the time Icelandic rap veterans 1985! and XXX Rottweiller punched the air and delivered hard-charging sets, the crowd was hyped. But the evening was a mixed bag – a little too much bluster, and not enough memorable moments.

Most acts featured one to four MCs plus a DJ; most also featured beats that were more interesting than the rapping. The early groups ranged from English-language rhymes delivered in a Boston accent and backed by bright, soul-specked grooves (O.N.E) to Beastie Boys-style party-rap in English (Original Melody), with Sesar A doing what Americans call “undie” hip-hop – blazing, wordy verses in Icelandic, set against minimalist funk beats.

Each of those acts was fun to watch at times, but they didn't have enough hot rhymes to keep the crowd hooked for a full half-hour. Poetrix did. Between his tricky, nimble flows, needling voice and catchy beats long on horn samples and other little hooks, his was the evening's most enjoyable set. Poetrix stood out for the right reasons, whereas the ten-piece band Audio Improvement just seemed out of place. They mixed hyper-serious rhymes with moody rock grooves; the effect was something like Linkin Park with a lesser MC and no metal jones.

Both 1985! and XXX Rottweiller took a similar approach: Brassy, adrenaline-pumped rhymes set against dark, spare, club-shaking music, with Rottweiller tossing in catchy choruses and syncopated grooves that sounded a bit reggaeton. None of this was terribly original, and much of it was hard to take. But it was enough for the crowd, who hung on every word, danced frenetically and begged Rottweiller for an encore. Christian Hoard

Organ

It started with a whimper and ended with a bang. The Diversion Sessions, the solo side project of Skátar frontman Markús Bjarnason, delivered his short but intense acoustic tracks to crowds first drifting in. His uneasy but alluring voice caught its stride mid-set, ending the set with a sincere take on the theme to “Never Ending Story.”

Lullabies typically signal the end of a night, but nobody told that to Klassart, whose heavy-eyed though talented frontlady killed softly. The Americana group particularly flourished on “Painkillers and Beer,” though they stumbled all over Beck's “Sing It Again.”

Typically, bands that draw from their favourite influences from the '60s and '70s are considered “throwback.” In B. Sig's case, the fivesome is a throw-, catapult-, heave- and projectile-back, veering dangerously close to the Doors' “Roadhouse Blues” with every step to the mic.

Múgsefjun was an instantly lovable crew, with their whirring melodies punctuated with accordion (and the occasional, forgivable flute solo). Hjalti Þorkelson is a gifted and impassioned vocalist, his timeless voice boosted by the complex textures of electric guitar and drummer Eiríkur Fannar Torfason. Dressed in matching white ladies' blazers christened with splashes of paint, Organ's sole American group of the evening, the very fun Minneapolis- troupe Solid Gold, delivered their sweaty dance-rock despite the general lack of... well, dancing. The trio, who operated off of programmed drums, lacked in any volume dynamic, but who can really notice when someone's constantly and sexily yelling at you?

After a couple false starts, the Zuckakis Mondevano Project finally got off the ground with its old-skool, scratch-heavy sound. The group obviously has heart, but came off as unpractised and lacked any genuine bombast (funny hats don't count). The tastefully monickered Cocktail Vomit capped off the night with female-led dance tunes that could have easily been blasted in roller-skating rinks circa 1995. Also: singing lyrics from a sheet only makes for good karaoke. Katie Hasty

Grand Rokk

There are bands for which precision is prized. <3 Svanhvít! are not one of those bands. Nevertheless, the Icelandic octet's brash, jubilant set, full of missed notes and off-key vocals, was the highlight of the opening night show at Grand Rokk. Their songs are terrifically ramshackle, seeming more the result of happy accident than careful planning. They blend punk's ragged energy with childlike naïveté, shoving beery, football-chant choruses up against skronking saxophones and barrelling barroom piano. Their set didn't end so much as unravel, all eight members jumping up and down in unison as their final song collapsed around them.

Naflakusk, whose fifteen members competed for space on the small Grand Rokk stage, were just as winsome if a bit more well-organised. Five female vocalists, done up in facepaint and bright shirts, sang in unison over tidy piano arpeggios and rigid drum machines. The one element of chaos came from guitarist David, who stood at the lip of the stage quaking – perhaps a bit too violently – to the group's musical theatre compositions.

The evening's other acts were more focused. For A Minor Reflection's songs slowly evolved from icy guitar arpeggios to thundering sheets of sound. Vicky Pollard's blistering riff-rock was guided by Eygló's laser beam voice. Perla mined metal, winding their way through laboriously-crafted prog-rock suites. And Grasrætur, whose bluesy songs were full of women who were either cumming or going, proved longer on machismo than melody.

Only a handful of people remained to see the funk-metal quartet Alræði Öreiganna. Their meticulous renditions of songs from Peter and the Wolf were about as exciting as they sound. J. Edward Keyes





The crowd by Skari



Lights on the Highway by Árni Torfason



Smoosh by Árni Torfason

Barinn

Dub can do funny things to a disco ball. Slotting somewhere between reggae and the sound of a train off in the distance, the kind of dub played early at the Barinn Airwaves Club on Wednesday spun out slowly, with rumbling low-end rhythms and highs that followed the eerie speed of the orb spinning on the ceiling. DJ Ingví opened with a set of old-school dub (King Tubby, Lee "Scratch" Perry, etc.), before Ewok moved into the realm of "dubstep," the ghostly sound borne from London. Ewok's set skewed as more slinking and minimal, with traditional dub elements updated through modern sound-design and antic rhythms that rolled out as a contemplative overhaul of jungle.

Reykjavík producer Orange Volante/Panoramix followed with a superb set of dubby house music played live on his laptop. The crowd started to move as the groove teased out before it reached a more fevered pitch, with the producer pumping his fists and twitchy drum-sounds flying all around. One particularly rousing passage built to a crescendo that sounded like 1,000 cicadas on a hot summer night, which primed the speakers for more dubstep from Kalli and especially the headliners: Mala & Sgt. Pokes, from the London dubstep group Digital Mystikz.

True to form, the duo upped the bass-pressure significantly, with Mala on turntables and Pokes scatting on a microphone, like a toaster from an old Jamaican soundclash. Pokes uttered the word "wicked" close to 20 times in the course of an hour, and he was right: the sound was heavy and haunted, drawn from a mix of gut-punching sub-bass and cymbal shots that ricocheted over the heads of a crowd that had taken to jumping up and down. "You're gonna have good luck for the rest of the week," Pokes shouted, his dreadlocks swinging. "Wicked vibes tonight." Indeed. Andy Battaglia

NASA

Early sound problems obscured some promising elements in Rúnar Þórisson's opening set. Þórisson's guitar work and Helga Ágústsdóttir's underutilised cello were beautiful during the rare moments when the band quieted down enough to hear them.

Single Drop's Birkir Rafn Gíslason isn't the most original guitarist out there but he clearly has enough talent to stake out some territory of his own. When all of the elements clicked, as they did on the exquisite "Oceans," the results were impressive.

Eliza Newman seemed to get increasingly comfortable with her status as frontwoman as the crowd filled in. The material swerved from Beth-Orton-with-a-knife to fist pumping Iggy Pop punk and its success was equally varied.

The three sisters that make up the band Smoosh, ages 11 to 15, have genuine talent and write surprisingly well-constructed pop songs. Most impressive was 13 year-old drummer Chloe, whose subtlety and feel on the kit carries the band. If the capacity crowd was a bit subdued, they came to life as the band powered through a cover of Bloc Party's "This Modern Love".

Soundspell had plenty of rock star moves, but seems to still be finding their musical personality. They negotiated the space between ambient Icelando-weird and hipster dance rock, but couldn't quite figure out which camp they belonged in.

The revelation of the night was Iceland's Lights on the Highway. Builds were slow, changes were unobtrusive, and they eschewed the obvious for the thoughtful. The band has a rare understanding of the architecture of a song, and put it to good use in a set that alternately brought to mind Will Oldham and Wilco.

Shadow Parade has its eye trained on Radiohead, but ends up sounding more like Moby producing a Soundgarden record. As able musicians playing mostly forgettable songs, there wasn't much to dislike about the band, but there wasn't much to like either. Don Bartlett

Off-venue

If a critical handicap has been placed on Seattle's Smoosh for their "tweenage" status, it becomes more and more outdated every year.

A drummer may spend his whole life trying to attain the level of creative and technical skill that saturates 13-year-old Chloe's beats and fills. She just rocks. Add that to Asya's oft-fuzzy, oft-clean staccato piano lines and nasally vocals and you've got something intensely singular, moving even.

It became clear throughout the set that Eliza had not been told as a child that the audience would never recognise a slip-up, as every single time she went off key or missed a note she would practically signal us all with a shrug or a pout. Nonetheless, "Return to Me," with its heart-sleeved cheesiness and shattering violin solo was gorgeous, engaging – placing her entirely above the relentless Kate Bush comparisons, if only for a few minutes.

It seems that the members of The Duke Spirit are flirting with the idea of aesthetic assimilation with every Interpol rip-off band ever, even if they manage to reject any post-punk self-indulgence. All in all, The Duke Spirit played a tight set, with just enough distortion and fuzz to give the illusion that it wasn't. Chandler Fredrick

Skakkamanage that recently put out their debut Lab of Love started the waves with a few afternoon tunes, attracting a steady row of local fans to the upstairs aquarium. Sadly enough the venue made them sound...well, a bit like they were playing in an aquarium.

Khonnor filled 12 Tónar with walls of experimental sounds, sitting on the floor in his pyjama pants like a shaman himself. He was followed by the múm singer Ótöf Arnalds going solo, chanting a few lullabies in her angelic voice. Finally, the stage was taken by the hairy Canadians, Plants and Animals. After the slightly chaotic beginning with the drummer stuck in the toilet, guitar string broken and the 12 Tónar crew reminding the audience of free alcohol, they played with charming energy, making the packed record store nod their heads along. Sari Peltonen



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR

Iðnó

The most novel occurrence at Iðnó on Thursday involved six electric guitarists playing single-chord drones to deafening and perplexing effect, but first came the swans. After an opening set by Stereo Hypnosis, an electronic-music duo reminiscent of Aphex Twin, a dozen or so swans in the lake outside the venue started squawking an atonal coda of their own. It picked up on the nature sounds threaded through the set just ended. It also set the tone for a night given to mystical—and occasionally mystifying—ambitions. The second set featured Kira Kira, who set her slight voice against toyshop backdrops crafted with music boxes, melodica, xylophone, and guitar.

My Summer as a Salvation Soldier followed with a plaintive set of emo-folk. Singer Þórir catalogued a litany of afflictions (heartache, awkwardness, utter despair) in songs that hinted at hope but remained haunted by the suspicion that “death is the only way you’re going to win.” Ólöf Arnalds offered a reprieve, as well as the night’s best set, with songs that were both intricate and perfectly simple. Arnalds is a dexterous folk guitarist, but she’s also a singer, which helped explain her impressive sense of restraint. So did the nature of her voice—a delicate but forceful coo she made soar to stirring heights or trill down low according to mood.

The rest of the night was given over to Bedroom Community, the label helmed by local producer Valgeir Sigurðsson. The first act featured Sigurðsson on laptop, with just a floor drum by his side. His electronic textures were mesmerizing and big on minimal rhythms (like his work with Björk), but collaborator Nico Muhly marred the effect with melodramatic piano lines.

The next piece by Ben Frost focused on essentially one sound: the obliterating roar of six guitars made as fuzzy and loud as possible. Frost himself mixed it all in the back, while the six players on stage grimaced, writhed, moshed, and fell down. It was a sight to see, but it also raised a question, perhaps unintentionally: was the point of the exercise to expose the ridiculousness of certain gestures made while playing guitar? The mass of sound itself would have seemed to be the ostensible star, but the cartoonish moves (by guitarists wearing headphones, no less) introduced a distracting array of other notions to mull. Such was less the case with the 11-person orchestra supporting Sam Amidon, who finished with a set of old American folk songs given a symphonic rendering. The best was “Sugar Baby,” a classic from the 1920s by the banjo-playing coalminer Dock Boggs. Amidon performed it like it was written by a ghost still very much invested in earthly concerns. **Andy Battaglia**



My Summer as a Salvation Soldier by Leó Stefánsson



Gaukurinn

One of the most rewarding things about charting the evolution of heavy metal over the last two decades (give or take) has been the opportunity to watch it splinter off into countless subgenres. Thursday's show at Gaukurinn provided a kind of user's guide, showcasing metal's children in all their stages of development.

Far and away the most successful re-inventers were the LA band The Bronx, who closed the show at Gaukurinn with a burst of white-hot fury. They've figured out how to further the genre by shaving it down in size. Their songs are brutish and blunt and barrel forward with all the grace and elegance of a boulder. They've managed a neat trick, taking standard '70s rock riffs and playing them at ten times the speed. Vocalist Matt Caughthran was being passed overhead by the eager crowd before their set was even three songs old, and there was a sense of camaraderie and community that pervaded the group's volcanic songs.

"It's so hard being in this band," Caughthran said midway through the set. "We're probably going to break up tomorrow." Here's hoping he's got a thing for tall tales.

Sign, from Hafnarfjörður, could have done with a bit more unscripted anarchy. Vocalist Zolberg, looking fetching in red mascara and lipstick, spent as much time dramatically stroking his blonde mane as he did voicing his band's rote glam rock songs. Brain Police offered fierce licks and fiercer beards, but were short on imagination. And Momentum's meticulous thrash was lost on the dozen or so people who'd arrived early enough to see them.

Better were two bands who used metal as a jumping-off point. Gavin Portland fused metal's fury with emo's bleary-eyed passion and We Made God mingled it with the best parts of British shoegaze, delivering a set made up not so much of songs as droning bands of sound.

In terms of sheer white-knuckle terror, few bands could match the sarcophagal bleakness of the Icelandic death metal band Changer. Their songs were pure harrowing drops into the abyss, pairing jackhammer guitars with vocals that went from death growl to body-on-fire screech. By their set's end they'd successfully managed to clear the club, but their terrifying force was almost matchless. They also managed an unintended pun. Their vocalist wore a T-Shirt bearing the name of legendary Icelandic metal band Ham. As the night wore on, it took on a sly double-meaning. The animal Satan is most commonly associated with is the pig; Changer proved absolutely capable of eating him for lunch. J. Edward Keyes



Clockwise from top: Sign by Gúndi, Changer by Emma Svensson, Gavin Portland by Emma Svensson, and The Bronx by Skari.



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR



Late of the Pier by Rúnar



Jenny Wilson by Emma Svensson



Boys in a Band by Rúnar

NASA

Nasa was packed to the gills Thursday evening, with young people and greying middle-agers alike jockeying for elbow room all night. Though the venue was consistently full, the lineup was all over the place: The six acts included a folky duo (Slow Club), a ten-piece Icelandic collective (Retro Stefson) and two highly buzzed-about English bands (Friendly Fires and Late of the Pier). Overall, it was a so-so evening: no minds were blown, presumably, and good songs were at a premium. But every band had their moments, and most had their eccentricities.

Slow Club, which featured a man on acoustic guitar and woman on drums, mixed sweet harmonies with wordy verses and random shouts. Best Friends were far weirder. Taking the stage before a backdrop covered in grotesque cartoon faces, the two skinny Americans writhed around to dance music for five minutes while undressing to the waist and then slipping on identical tee-shirts. Eventually, they ploughed through a set featuring hyper-speed electro and angry punk vocals, jumping around all the while. The songs were nothing special, but they succeeded in putting quizzical looks on many faces.

After friendly, Latin-tinged pop-rock from Retro Stefson, The Teenagers turned out some forgettable synth-pop. Then, Friendly Fires showed off their romantic choruses and tightly-wound dance-punk grooves, at times evoking Bloc Party. They could have used better songs, but more than any other band tonight, they moved asses.

Compared with Friendly Fires, Late of the Pier were messier and more interesting. Their set also trafficked in dance-punk, but every song seemed to have four or five sections. There were loads of synths and long jams, with singer Samuel Dust alternating between pained yelps and catchy chants. Given the shambolic nature of their songs, it's hard to imagine the band blowing up, even at home in England. But tonight, they had enough spastic energy to keep the capacity crowd happy. Christian Hoard

RVK Art Museum Lídó

The monolithic sound in the Reykjavík Art Museum was used as a crutch but often as a catalyst on Thursday night, all depending on the minute. Akranes native Worm Is Green, whose primary lyric consisted of "ooo," appeared with the advantage of massive reverb, enchanting lead vocalist Guðríður Ringsted and an all-too-enthusiastic crew led by Árni Ásgeirsson. However, it took until the fourth or fifth song, after a sleepy cover of Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart," for the crew to warm to a stage presence stronger than that of box of hair. Still, the robust bass lines could clear sinuses, which led perfectly into Am-pop's melodramatic set. Despite the heavy-handed emotional grandeur, these gents were well-coordinated, well-practiced and clearly capable of writing a meaningful and long-lasting chorus.

Jenny Wilson introduced her track "Bitter" by quoting its lyric "I love to complain"; the songwriter shouldn't have anything to complain about after her stellar set, tackling torch songs and dance tunes alike with her pop-cum-disco-via-lounge aesthetic until the crowd was practically eating out of her hands. Idiosyncratic doesn't even begin to describe Wilson and her band's hypnotic brand of other-worldly, orchestral musings; she is simply to be seen to be believed.

On the other hand, Lay Low, bred from the relaxed cooings of Lovisa, felt close and intimate, kicking off her impressive performances with the breakout hit "Mojo Style" and forging into subdued cowgirl tracks like "Please Don't Hate Me." Brooklyn, New York's own Grizzly Bear rounded out the night, stitching together '60's inspired psychedelic pop song after song with moaning effects and hazy vocal bleeds. The dreamy foursome took their time building and releasing on tracks like "Knife" and "Lullabye," inhaling with emotive vigour and exhaling only when necessary. Katie Hasty

The character of a venue tends to run in inverse proportion to the likelihood that I would consider taking a shit in their restrooms. Though the opportunity didn't present itself, I would gladly saddle up comfortably with a magazine in the Lídó WC. True to the equation, the cavernous basement was more suited to a corporate sales meeting than a rock show, with large 10-person tables surrounded by plush faux-velvet chairs and a temporary dance floor that would be more at home at a wedding.

Icelandic quintet Wulfgang never was able to overcome the awkwardness of the room, and even when they geared up from the bluesy opener to Metallica-without-the-growl songs later in the set, the result was middling.

Wherever the Faroe Islands are, they apparently have a strong school of charisma, as Boys in a Band had the suddenly-packed audience dancing and pumping fists within minutes of starting their tight set. A few songs veered towards The Strokes with little success, but the bulk of the set was potent post-punk, and their song "Super Contagious" was the high point of the evening.

Norway's Ungdomskullen followed with a dose of heavier material. When it worked it was Iron Maiden shoehorned into the tight agile song structure of Pinback. When it didn't it devolved into a masturbatory wash of noise that served no other purpose than clearing the room of females.

Sprenghöllin was the crowd favourite, and while they didn't always play tightly, they were well-stocked in the most elusive currency....catchy, well-crafted songs. The set was engaging and fun, but it's hard not to imagine that they'll be a far better band at Airwaves 2008.

The Duke Spirit took that stage at midnight with their able brand of indie rock. If Sprenghöllin was the most promising band of the night, the UK group was easily the most professional. Liela Moss accessorised her bold, melodic voice with a strong stage presence, and while the band isn't going to change the world anytime soon, they certainly don't disappoint in a live setting. Don Bartlett



Rhonda and the Runestones by Rúnar



Electroll by Skari



The End by Gúndi

Organ

At 20:15, *Organ* is ready. Chandeliers are lit, people are dehydrating, and the bull's head mounted to the wall is freaking everyone out nicely. One Irish lady and her Icelandic bandmates, *Rhonda and the Runestones*, appear: wrapped in a ripped glitter corset, she rants like a girl gone missing in the part of town your mum always told you to avoid, grabbing the lens of a daring photographer to demand: "What the fuck are you doing here?!" Um... being frightened?

Úlpa provide much-needed medicine with tremulous vocals and withering seascapes. Their sound is somehow comforting in its loneliness; you feel submerged and lost, but happy with it.

Then, *The Telepathetics* arrive: girls eagerly donate drinks, boys get all arty with their camera angles, and both genders seem equally willing for all band members to remove their clothing. The atmosphere is, er, 'hormonal' and not without reason. This group's epic histrionics sure are infectious: beneath lyrics about torn love, their guitars are smart, cute n' dangerous. Later, *Kimono* bring more of the emotive cries, but somehow lack the same reaching, keening tones.

It's approaching midnight, and man, it's hot. The kind of hot where our drinks are evaporating before they've been poured; the kind of hot where you think you've mistakenly taken some serious pharmaceuticals and are imagining that five blokes in gold spandex leggings are throwing shapes onstage. Oh, wait. They are. As *Skátar* rip into the zapped, frayed keyboards of 'Skálholt', all manner of playful violence breaks out. Their set is testosterone-charged enough for the masses to mosh; but it's also complex and incalculable enough to keep your brain boiling over with their wrongly-wired rhythms.

Lastly, *Khonnor* emerge wearing judge's wigs and oversized lime green shades. Layering their ominous hums, they create a slow-mo horror-movie soundtrack. We're amused, we're confused, and just a tiiny bit scared... Lauren Strain

Barinn

As the drizzle outside tapered off, confusion reigned heavily in the nearly empty second floor of Barinn. The DJs scheduled to perform were experiencing some minor scheduling difficulties. As they congregated on the small stage to work it out, the lights went down and the disco ball began rotating, spurring an amicable resolution to their spontaneous summit on set times. Swedish DJs *Leaf* and *Social* kicked things off with a brief drum 'n bass set, shaking the building's foundations with bowel-weakening bass drops and sparkling snares. Their tag-team mix included a jungle version of Kanye West's "Gold Digger", buttressing the theory that d'n'b really is hip-hop's kid brother.

Things got much more interesting when local boy *Subminimal* set up shop behind his computer. He is truly a laptop-jockey forging new paths in the world of crackling digitalism, effortlessly rendering half-time ambient soundscapes laced with rough-edged breaks. *Raychem* took over next. His jazzy, swinging style had a lighter touch, but stayed well away from clichéd LTJ Bukem-style atmospherics. Ominous drum skitters teetered on the brink of tension-filled canyons of silence throughout his set. The room was now only about half full, which didn't lessen the desire of drunken dancers to hoot and holler their approval.

Leaf returned to the turntables to deliver a seriously grimy set of head-cracking beats, which included a Dizzee Rascal remix. The hyped-up energy could be felt outside as well, where an impromptu freestyle session was delivered on the curb. The show was rounded out by a rugged d'n'b blend courtesy of Iceland's own *Breakbeat.is residents* and Holland's *Martyn*, who seamlessly melded roughneck sounds into a hypnotic dance-floor mix. On a night when Grizzly Bear and The Bronx were drawing the big crowds, this lively corner of the 101 proved that Iceland's d'n'b faithful are a force to be reckoned with. Jonah Flicker

Grand Rokk

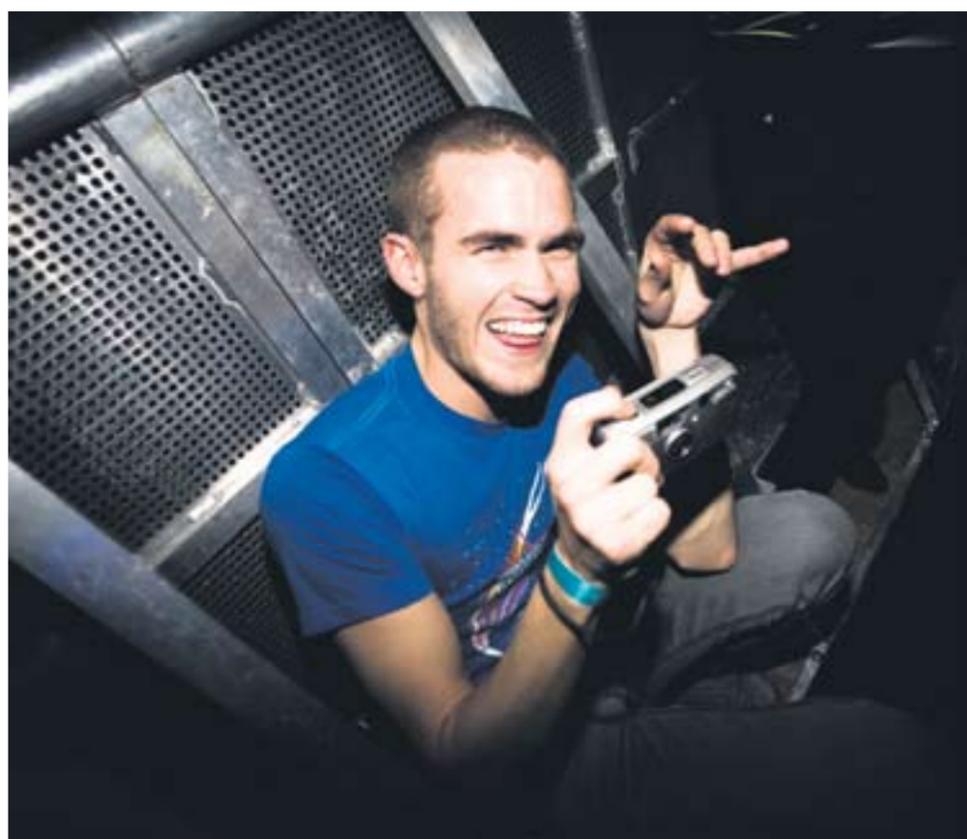
For a Thursday night in Reykjavík, Grand Rokk had the atmosphere of a bankrupt morgue on the dark side of the moon. Not Pink Floyd's dark side of the moon, but a far duller place where ten people stick to the sides of the room like flies to gaffer tape and the opening band, sister act *Beteley*, alienate the resident beings pretty proficiently with some grey old low-fi folk destined for obscurity. Black-clad *Motorfly* don't have much success either, despite some interestingly dark swathes of Dinosaur Jr-style noise rock seasoned with the hotter bits of The Fall, but *The End*, a deftly executed exercise in Joy Division-influenced electro rock, finally brought some necessary animation to the evening with the lead singer's aloof, quivering vocals and erratic dancing played out to a set of genuinely decent songs.

The End have a man called Golden Boy on guitar which is just what *The Nanas* could use to bulk out their simplistic piano-and-vocal arrangement, a combination glued together with lyrics such as "eyes filled with tears/I think of you my friend/everything is grey/the sun is ice cold/the world is dead/it died tonight/the same time you did" Imagine if Celine Dion did an MTV Unplugged set on Valentines Day in Paris and you're still an uplifting key change away from the level of cliché involved.

Númer Núll donated some more grungy walls of noise and feedback backed by desperately meek vocals and *Royal Fortune* racked up the backward-looking lyrics and sub-Iron & Wine material to a still sparsely populated room before midnight came and *Who Knew* accelerated the capacity from non-existent to sweaty wall-level within the space of five minutes. So *The End* was both the beginning of the end and the end of almost all that was good at Grand Rokk last night, bar some drunken sweat-drenched dancing inspired by *Who Knew*. Ben H. Murray



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR



Clockwise from top-left:
Good times at Organ by Leó Stefánsson, Lights on the Highway by Emma Svensson, more good times at Organ by Leó Stefánsson, Soundspell by Árni Torfason, and Ben Frost by Leó Stefánsson.



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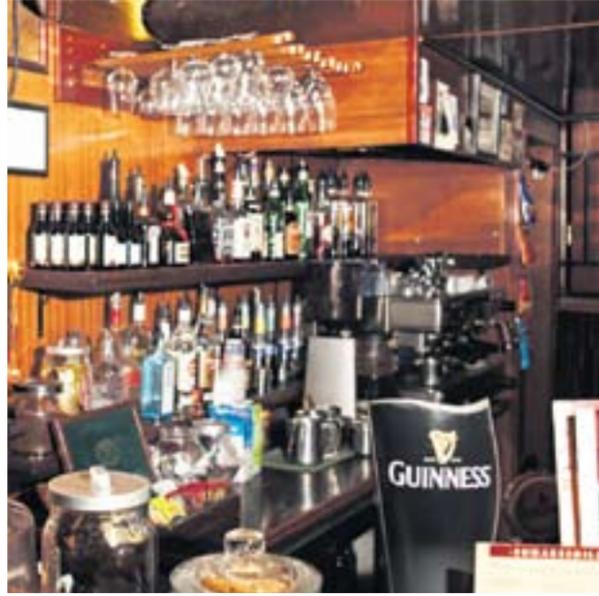


Á næstu grösom

Laugavegur 20b

The healthy meat-free feast at *Á næstu grösom* has won the cosy restaurant a loyal following. Guests are welcomed by an impressive buffet of nutritious vegan and vegetarian courses cooked from quality ingredients without sugar, yeast or manufactured food additives. The day's specials are written on a blackboard next to the buffet where the waiter is set to stuff your plate with everything from veggie-stews, quiches and pasta to salads, rice and sauces. Indian Fridays are always spot-on.

Drinking



Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið is one of the oldest cafés in Reykjavík and everything inside bears witness to lots of drinking, smoking and chatting: a combination that gives the place a special ancient charm. When the youngish clientele crowds in on weekends the cosy café transforms into a party playground, open for everyone energetic enough. But *Prikið* also offers a reasonably priced bistro menu and the *Airwaves* special breakfast, served with an ample dose of live music, something all *Airwaves* attendees must try.

Shopping



Aftur

Laugavegur 23

Sisters *Bára* and *Hrafnhildur 'Raven' Hólmgeirsdóttir* are internationally acclaimed designers and stylists and their label, *Aftur*, can be found in fashion capitals across the world. The sisters recycle second-hand fabrics they sample at vintage shops, warehouses and street markets, to create new trendy outfits that look chic and are comfortable to wear. *Aftur's* unique collection is available at their shop and studio with the same name on the second floor of Laugavegur 23, open from 12–18.



Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

Geirsgata 1

Owned by local hamburger legend *Tommi*, the numerous regulars acclaim his small burger joint, usually just called 'Búllan,' to be the best one in town. Located down by the harbour, *Tommi's* fast-food place, decorated with Christmas lights, movie posters and kids drawings, offers simple yet very filling burger meals to feast on while reading *MAD* magazines from as far back as the 80s. Cheeseburger, fries and soda cost 890 ISK. The veggie-burger is also a must-try.



Boston

Laugavegur 28b

When *Boston* opened its doors, the spacious bar immediately became a major hit among the city's many bar-hoppers. The casual atmosphere, stylish interiors, low-volume music and nice crowd create a laid-back vibe on any given day, ideal for early drinks and chitchats. The comfy two-floored bar provides plenty of seats and recently started serving great traditional Icelandic dishes to all of the hungry regulars (try the 'kjötsúpa' and 'plokkiðskur'.) Open from lunchtime until late in the evening.



Photos by GAS

Kronkron

Laugavegur 63b

Located on the corner of Laugavegur and Vitastígur, this hip clothing wonderland sells trendy designer wear for both sexes. Here shoppers can purchase everything from funky streetwear and elegant dresses to limited-edition shoes and jewellery from major fashion labels such as *Vivienne Westwood*, *Umbro*, *Cheap Monday*, *Marc by Marc Jacobs* and many more. Last year, fashion magazine *Eurowoman* voted *KronKron* as one of the best concept stores in the world. *KronKron* is also often transformed into an art gallery.

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Baldur Björnsson

Baldur Björnsson graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2003. He has worked as a graphic designer, kindergarten cop and parking attendant, played with experimental electronics bands, Kona and Snatan:Últra, collaborated with noise artist Auxpan and has an ongoing solo project, Krakkbót. His art projects have been presented at numerous group and solo exhibitions.

What will you exhibit at the Sequences festival?

My involvement in Sequences is twofold. In the first place, I will show three videos from a series I've been working on for a number of months. The videos are entitled: Burzum+Sími, Eik+Numminu and True Frodo II. They will be shown at a screening in the Regnboginn cinema, along with other, lesser, works by different artists.

In the second place, I will present a performance in the Living Arts Museum on Friday, October 12, as part of the opening ceremony. It is the second performance in the series Death / Dauði. This particular performance is called Choke On It / Svelgstu Á, featuring the infamous Jón Pálmar Sigurðsson on corpse paint and strobe lights.

What is the idea behind it?

The videos are ultra-short glimpses of life filled with tedium, children, love, black metal and masculinity. The performance will be a striking juxtaposition of the male voice and flashing lights. It is a celebration of youth and old age.

How would you describe your artwork in general?

A multi-tendriled amoeba of some kind, sucking in information and experiences then shitting them out in new and exciting configurations. Also, musical, painterly, performed and sculpturific.

What influences your art?

Fortified compounds and fallout shelters.



Sara Riel

With a MA degree from Kunsthochschule Berlin, Sara Riel has exhibited in Iceland, Germany, Iran, New Zealand, Japan, Belgium, Spain, Denmark and Holland. She has designed CD covers for local musicians Ólöf Arnalds and Skakkamanage and her works featured in numerous books and magazines on street art.

What will you exhibit at the Sequences festival?

My exhibition will be at 101 Gallery, Hverfisgata 18b and opens at 17:00 on Saturday. The exhibition takes on modern machinery, machines that we use for our own comfort and pleasure, like the airplane, the elevator and television. In our everyday life we are used to use these machines and take them almost for granted, but we are also sometimes afraid of them, they can invoke phobias, panic attacks and human manipulation. The viewer becomes the figurative part of the play. Gunnar Örn Tynes will also perform a motorcycle symphony with the local motorcycle club.

How would you describe your artwork in general?

Conceptual in its nature, can be figurative but doesn't have to. It's storytelling in different forms, playful at times, sometimes silly but never without a hidden message of some sort.

What influences your art?

Experiences and knowledge. Other creative people, art, music, theatre and cinema. Simple pleasures and funny accidents/coincidences; you know, when one gets puzzled about how everything can sometimes fit into place at the right moment and at the right time.

Are you going to Airwaves?

I'll try to get tickets to múm, I would love to see them. But I am too busy planning and working for the exhibition that I could miss a lot of interesting stuff. But for sure I'll enjoy the vibe in Reykjavík.



Photos by GAS

Huginn Þór Arason

In 2007, Huginn Þór Arason graduated with a MA degree from Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna. His works, a range of performances, paintings, drawings and sculptures, have for example been exhibited at the Living Art Museum, Suðsuðvestur, ASÍ Art Museum, Kling & Bang Gallery and the Transporter showroom in Vienna. He has also co-curated exhibitions such as 'The Apostles' Clubhouse' in the Reykjavík Art Museum and the exhibition-project 'Signals in the Heavens.'

What will you exhibit at the Sequences festival?

My pieces will be shown at Safn, Laugavegur 37. They are a collection of works from 2002–2007. It's a brief overview showing my roots of interest in drawing and painting. It's an abstract expansion of spirit.

How would you describe your artwork in general?

Performative.

What influences your art?

Issues – both public and private – where reality merges with the absurd.

Are you going to Airwaves and if so, what bands/musicians are you most excited about?

Yes. Deerhoof and the new múm programme.

Tips to foreign Airwaves guests: What is a must-do or must-see in Reykjavík?

Ragnar Kjartansson in the Living Art Museum, go to Einar Jónsson sculpture park and the Tjarnarbíó Nighths at Sequences from October 18–20.

Sequences Real Time Art Festival takes place in galleries, museums and shops around downtown Reykjavík during Iceland Airwaves. For full schedule go to www.sequences.is

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Check it!

The Nordic House Programme

Mr. Destiny, in collaboration with The Nordic House and Nordic Culture Point, presents for the first time a very special Airwaves programme at the respectable cultural institution, The Nordic House. Only a few minutes walk from the city centre, The Nordic House will play host to daily concerts with carefully selected Nordic Airwaves acts, including Jenny Wilson, Motion Boys, Seabear, Boys in a Band and Benni Hemm Hemm. At the same time, the cosy cafeteria offers an energising Airwaves brunch-menu, specially prepared for weary festivalgoers.

In between acts, it's ideal to check out the two exhibitions put up for the occasion. One is a photography exhibition, displaying one-off moments of past festivals captured by numerous Airwaves photographers. The other offers a small branch of Árbæjarsafn's historical Disco vs. Punk exhibition, which explores the two subcultures that rose and intermingled in Reykjavík in the 80s. The exhibition consists of information on disco/punk hot-shots, photos and videos, including 1982 documentary 'Rock in Reykjavík' starring punk-rock acts such as Purrkur Pillnikk, Peyr, Egó and Björk as Tappi Tíkarass singer.

And there is more! In addition to the above mentioned, an open interview session between Icelandic and international journalists and musicians Bubbi Morthens, múm, Buck 65, GusGus and many more takes place on Friday. Bound to be interesting to watch. Sunday will then see a screening of the documentary 'Screaming Masterpiece', featuring Mínus, múm, Björk, Mugison and Sigur Rós among other local talents.

The programme is open to everyone, free of charge. For a full schedule see www.icelandairwaves.com

Open interviews schedule:

17:00-17:20 – Bubbi vs. Árni Matt

17:25-17:45 – múm vs. Arnar Eggert

17:45-18:00 – Musical interlude

18:00-18:20 – Buck 65 vs. Árni Matt

18:25-18:45 – President Bongo vs. Arnar Eggert

The Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, 101 Reykjavík
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Gojira from Iceland Airwaves 2006. Photo by Skari



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Maria / Project manager, Sweden
I love that wherever you end up, you're bound to see something great. The fact that Airwaves is not an outdoor festival is really nice. No Mud. No Tents. It's a hassle-free festival.



Lauren / Student, Australia
Jenny Wilson was terrifying, in a way that defies description. You could tell there was a very serious history behind her and her music, and yet her humour was subtle. She was incredibly inspiring.



Egill / Works at an old folk's home, Iceland
I travelled all the way from Akureyri to see !!! and also to meet some pretty ladies. I'd like to get drunk and get some booty.



Nico / Travel Agent, Canada
This festival is spectacular, as it brings together all kinds of different people and cultures. My favourite so far has been Ben Frost, because he has such an explosive energy.



Photo by Héðinn Eiríksson

Icelandair Waves

Halldór Harðarson is the director of marketing for Icelandair, the main sponsor of the Iceland Airwaves festival. The Grapevine Airwaves sat down with Harðarson to find out why an airline company decided to establish a music festival.

What is Icelandair's involvement in the festival?

Icelandair established Iceland Airwaves, along with Mr. Destiny (the festival promoter) in 1999, and we continue to be in partnership with them and the city of Reykjavik to run the festival. This is a joint venture between these three parties and Icelandair is the festival's main sponsor. For us, this is an opportunity to present Iceland and Icelandic music to the outside world. Icelandic music is something that we are very proud to support. We believe music is one of our most exciting export goods. We wanted to create a platform for Icelandic musicians to reach the outside world. That is why we took part in creating the Iceland Airwaves in the first place.

The Festival keeps expanding. This year, there are 240 acts performing. Is there no limit to how much the festival can expand?

That's a good question. Of course we want to make the festival as important as possible, without losing the original ambition that started this project – to create a platform for up and coming musicians. The size is not the main thing, as long as the quality is there.

What does Icelandair stand to gain from participating in this sort of venture?

We are focused on introducing Iceland as a winter destination. For us, a music festival at this time of year is a tremendous gain. On top of the tickets we sell, we facilitate interest in Iceland as a cultural winter city break. We are targeting a specific group and that is the good thing about this festival, it is so focused and fits that group perfectly.

Have you seen any measurable result from this cooperation?

Yes, last year three thousand people came to the festival and they inject a lot of money into the city's economy. But we can also see increased interest for Reykjavik as a destination among this target group in our foreign markets, not just to come to the festival but to experience Reykjavik, and we see a lot of repeat customers.

What about yourself, are you a music fan?

Yes I am actually. I have participated in the festival as concertgoer every year. There is always something new and exciting this year.

Have you decided what you want to see this year?

Well, I haven't drawn up a detailed itinerary, but I want to see Heavy Trash and Grizzly Bear and The Motion Boys. These are the three bands I am most excited about at the moment.



Hobbit / Club owner, Germany
Lay Low was the biggest band tonight because she's so unique. She's a 21-year-old, half-Icelandic, half-Sri Lankan girl who sings really slow and impressive blues with big cojones.



Rich / Musician, New York
It's been an amazing night, even if we are kind of jetlagged. But I'm actually here to get married, and music is a huge part of our relationship. I saw three new bands I really enjoyed tonight – Worm is Green, The Bronx and The Teenagers.



Shaun / T.V Editor, USA
Grizzly Bear was the most impressive band by far. They were exciting, and I thought that the way they used their voices was really unique – for being an encore act I was impressed. Same with AmPop.



Natalie / Architecture Student, UK
I liked Late of the Pier. They were experimental rock, but not in an overly-trendy way. They had just the right amount of coolness. I liked NASA because I was upstairs, where it wasn't crowded.

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